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Viewing cable 08SANTIAGO1042, BORDER ISSUES IN NORTHERN CHILE: DISPUTES,

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tag **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08SANTIAGO1042**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08SANTIAGO1042	2008-11-28 19:46	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Santiago

Appears in these articles:

<http://elcomercio.pe/>

VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #1042/01 3331946
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281946Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4001
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 3647
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 2190
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0551
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 1157
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1858
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NOV 6033
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5824
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 1999
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 001042

SIPDIS

PM/RSAT FOR JEFF BURNETT
PENTAGON FOR KRISTI HUNT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2018

TAGS: [PBTS](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [KTIA](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#) [PE](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BORDER ISSUES IN NORTHERN CHILE: DISPUTES,
DEFENSE PL...

id: 180591
date: 11/28/2008 19:46
refid: 08SANTIAGO1042
origin: Embassy Santiago
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 08SANTIAGO931|08SANTIAGO942
header:
VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSG #1042/01 3331946
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 281946Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4001
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 3647
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 2190
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0551
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 001042

SIPDIS

PM/RSAT FOR JEFF BURNETT
PENTAGON FOR KRISTI HUNT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2018
TAGS: [PBTS](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [KTIA](#) [PREL](#) [CI](#) [PE](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: BORDER ISSUES IN NORTHERN CHILE: DISPUTES,
DEFENSE PLANS, AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

REF: A. SANTIAGO 931
[1](#)B. SANTIAGO 942

Classified By: E/Pol Chief Juan Alsace for reasons 1.4 (a) and (b).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: A contested border and drug trafficking can sometimes bedevil relations between Chile and Peru on a national level, while on a local level, officials from communities on both sides of the border appear committed to cooperation. Government officials in the northern Chilean border town of Arica report cooperation with their Bolivian colleagues is more difficult due to frequent staff changes. Arican government leaders claim Chile's defense plans essentially call for abandoning the city in the event of an attack from the north, and instead creating a hardline to Arica's south at, the port city of Iquique. While mistaken according to embassy defense sources, this perception is indicative of the disconnect from Santiago many Aricans feel.
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Poloff met with elected officials, law enforcement officers, business leaders, press, academic officials, and indigenous leaders during an October trip to the Arica and Parinacota region of northern Chile. Ref A reported on economic issues in the region, Ref B described local political challenges, including corruption and relations with the indigenous Aymara.

All Eyes on Maritime Dispute

[1](#)3. (SBU) Despite overall good relations with their Peruvian

neighbors in Tacna, Aricans were united in decrying Peru's decision to take their maritime border dispute to the Hague. Peru claims its maritime border with Chile should follow the trajectory of the land border, angling down to the southwest.

In contrast, the current maritime border runs parallel to longitudinal lines, giving Chile control over nearly 40,000 square kilometers of valuable fishing areas that Peru now claims. Diputado Ivan Paredes, a member of the Socialist Party, claimed Peru was being hypocritical by demanding a new maritime border, noting Peru benefits from having its maritime border with Ecuador follow longitudinal lines rather than the trajectory of the land border. Paredes was dismissive of Peruvian and Bolivian border claims, saying politicians in those countries find it expedient to appeal to nationalist pride and populist tendencies by calling for revised borders regardless of the validity of the claims. Poloff detected a sense among Aricans that the court case is far away and hard to influence, and a quiet confidence that Chile will come out on top.

Arica Left Out of Chilean Defense Plans?

14. (C) Both Diputado Paredes and District Attorney Jorge Valladares told Poloff Arica is left out of Chile's plans to defend the northern border in the case of an attack. According to the two government officials, the military determined that it would be too difficult to defend the city given the many gorges nearby. Instead, the military has planned for a hardline north of Iquique, and has stationed most of its F-16s there. (Note: DAO reports that, of Chile's fleet of 28 F-16s, the ten newest ones, which were purchased from the U.S., are based in Iquique. Basing these planes further north would expose them to risk from ground artillery. End Note.) Neither Paredes or Valladares were particularly troubled by this, remarking armed conflict is unlikely and that, in any case, Arica works hard to maintain favorable relations with Peru. (Comment: While it is true that Arica is geographically difficult to defend, Chilean ground forces have no intention of abandoning the city in the unlikely event that it is attacked, according to DAO sources.

Two regiments--a reinforced infantry brigade and the first combined arms brigade, one of the two elite operational units in the Chilean army--are based in Arica. There are also reinforced ground positions near Arica that could be used to help defend the city. End Comment.)

15. (SBU) Chile is also working to eliminate landmines in the region, which were planted along the borders with Peru and Bolivia during the Pinochet era. The Chilean government reported that in May 2008, the latest date for which statistics were available, there were 106,894 landmines in the country--including some in southern Chile near the Argentine border. While Chile had initially committed to eliminating its landmines by 2012, the government now says this is not possible. Locals in Arica were not particularly bothered by the slow pace of removal, noting that only one or two Aricans are injured by landmines each year. (Note: See IIR 6817001509 for more information on demining efforts in northern Chile. End Note.)

Drug Trafficking Challenges

16. (SBU) Arica struggles to control drug trafficking that occurs along its borders with Peru and Bolivia. According to Assistant District Attorney Francisco Ganga, drug traffickers use false compartments in suitcases and cars and body cavity smuggling to sneak drugs--almost entirely cocaine--into Chile via the Tacna-Arica border crossing. "Mules" also cross the land borders on foot at night, and some smuggle drugs by boat. Intendente Luis Rocafull told Poloff most mules are Peruvians--particularly Aymara women--who are paid about USD 40 to take a two hour walk across the border. Those caught in Chile face a minimum of seven years in jail. Arica is working on arranging a prisoner transfer agreement with Tacna, Rocafull said, as more than half of the women in Arica's prisons are Peruvian mules.

¶7. (SBU) At a working level, both District Attorney Jorge Valladares and ADA Ganga said they had good cooperation with their Peruvian counterparts, but little success in establishing relationships or promoting cooperation with Bolivian authorities. Valladares stated much of the problem is simply that the Bolivians tend not to stay in their positions for very long, making it difficult to create good working relationships. For his part, Intendente Rocafull expressed doubts about the efficacy of Peruvian law enforcement, noting the Arican police seize 10 times more drugs than their Tacnan peers.

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Several interlocutors commented that relations between local government officials and communities in northern Chile and southern Peru are often quite distinct--and more consistently friendly--than the sometimes tense relationship between Lima and Santiago. While there are substantial trade and links between indigenous communities in northern Chile and western Bolivia, human resource challenges seem to limit the effective cooperation between local governments in these areas. Paredes and Valladares' misperceptions about plans for Arica's defense shed light on the lack of connection and support from Santiago that some Aricans feel End Comment.
SIMONS

=====CABLE ENDS=====